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INFO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0266

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 000134

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR PRM AND DRL  
NAIROBI FOR REFCOORD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/26/2019  
TAGS: [PREF](#) [KE](#) [ER](#)  
SUBJECT: REFERRAL TO THE U.S. REFUGEE ADMISSIONS PROGRAM  
FOR RESETTLEMENT IN THE U.S.

Classified By: Ambassador Ronald K. McMullen for reason 1.4(d).

11. (U) This is an action cable. Action request is in paragraph five.

12. (C) U.S. Embassy Asmara supports the referral of Mr. Mahari Tesfagergishfor to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program for resettlement in the United States based on his fear of persecution and based on USG interest in his safety.

13. (C) Eritreans are required to perform national service, an indefinite burden devoid of living wages, promotion, or personal freedoms. The Eritrean government conscripted Mahari, despite his request for exemption in order to care for his ailing parents. Mahari eventually made his way to Sudan and now fears reprisal against himself and his family as he fled the country illegally. Post has found this fear to be justified; parents of national service evaders are often fined 50,000 nakfa (\$3,333) or are imprisoned or made to work "chain gang" style in the fields if they cannot pay the fine.

14. (C) Post has particular interest in Mahari's safety as well. His sister is a Physicians for Peace volunteer. The PFP program is one of the only areas where the Eritrean government chooses to collaborate with U.S. initiatives. However, the longer Mahari languishes in refugee camps, the more likely Eritrean authorities will learn of his whereabouts and eventually punish either his parents or his AmCit sister.

15. (C) ACTION REQUEST: Mahari is currently in Kenya. Post requests the Refugee Coordinator in Nairobi arrange a meeting with a USCIS Officer in Nairobi.

16. (C) Biographical details of Mr. Mahari: Mahari Tesfagergishfor, DOB 06-26-1977, POB Eritrea.

17. (SBU) Special treatment in this case would not open the floodgate for other refugee seekers as our standard response to such requests is to advise seeking assistance with the UNHCR office in Nairobi.

MCMULLEN